



SECRET/CONTROL - US OFFICIALS ONLY

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-2-

5. The work of the VTs has as its goals: (a) to detect correspondence between agents of foreign intelligence services; (b) to detect and eliminate letters the contents of which arouse suspicion of espionage; (c) to find and eliminate from letters, by crossing out, any information which could be used by enemy intelligence, which could serve as "imperialistic" propaganda material, or which could hurt the fighting spirit of the armed forces or that of the Soviet population. Even the prices of certain goods in the USSR were considered to be of use to foreign intelligence and were carefully crossed out by the censor.
6. These assignments of the VTs are carried out by numerous censors. Their duty is to read attentively the mail which arrives at the VTs of the GSOV in Germany from the central field post office.
7. The censor's work is appraised according to the number of letters checked in a work day and according to the number of letters he discovers which are "obviously" sent by spies or which contain information either suspicious or harmful to the Soviet Government. If the censor discovers anything of this kind, he takes the letters to the deputy chief or chief of the VTs, who gives him instructions on how to deal with the letter. Since the sender (in Germany) is obliged to give his address, in the majority of cases his location will be known. If the letter arouses suspicions of espionage, it is, depending on the importance of the case, photographed and sent to the address, or copied, or even confiscated and not forwarded to the address. Then one copy of the letter is sent to the organ of the MGB covering the area of the sender's residence, and another copy is sent to the MGB organ covering the addressee's residence. Both MGB organs, upon receiving these copies, place the sender and the addressee under agent investigation.
8. Sometimes the letter must be confiscated for operational reasons. In this case, the original and a copy of the letter are sent to the organs of the MGB which cover the area of the sender and the addressee. In such a case, in a covering letter the VTs Subsection would write: "We address to you here-with 'K' material of the sender (follows his address and information); the addressee is (information on the addressee)". The letter "K" in VTs means confiscation.
9. If the letter contains information which can be used by enemy intelligence or which endangers the Soviet Government because it can help enemy propaganda, this information is crossed out after a copy has been made of the letter. A memorandum is then sent to the corresponding organ of the MGB "for operational use". The latter organ starts an agent investigation on the basis of such a memorandum. In such a case the confiscation of the whole letter is not excluded.
10. In cases when an MGB organ suspects someone of criminal activity and in the course of the investigation requires that all connections of the supposed criminal be established, all correspondence must be placed under so-called "PK." The investigating MGB organ makes a special request to VTs: "We request that you place under 'PK' all the incoming and outgoing mail of such-and-such person and forward all information to us." Then the time during which the "PK" must be carried out is indicated. MGB organs understand the letters "PK" to mean "checking and control" (proverka i kontrol). However, some MGB personnel interpret these two letters as "censoring of correspondence" (perlyustratsiya korrespondentsii). In compliance with the MGB request, the VTs must censor all mail of such a person, both incoming and outgoing. Copies are regularly made of this mail and sent to the organ of the MGB.
11. The VTs Subsection does not carry on agent investigations, but is only an auxiliary organ which helps the MGB in its work.

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25X1

-3-

12. From 1945, a VTs also existed in Germany for the German population. German correspondence, however, was not checked openly, as was that of Soviet citizens. The personnel of this VTs was composed of young Soviet women who had recently completed brief courses in foreign languages. There were also a few censors who graduated from foreign language institutes. These censors' knowledge of foreign languages was very poor and they could read German gothic script only with difficulty.
13. About the end of 1945 or the beginning of 1946, a directive signed by the Commander-in-Chief of the Group of Occupation Forces (GSOV) was addressed to all army, corps, and division commanders which contained information provided by the VTs Subsection dealing with the mail of the German population. The directive contained extracts from letters written by Germans living in the Soviet Occupation Zone. These extracts showed the extreme anti-Soviet feeling of the Germans, who viewed Soviet soldiers as robbers and rapists. Marshal Zhukov ordered commanding officers (the directive was to be read to regimental commanders) to take decisive measures to fight undisciplined and criminal elements in the Soviet Army.
14. Prior to 1941, the correspondence of Soviet citizens was always checked by the organs of the MGB. This censorship, however, was not performed on a large scale, but was applied to mail of persons suspected of political crimes. Besides this, the MGB censorship undertook periodic general spot-checking of mail. In larger cities many mail boxes were equipped with special devices, which, when the letter was dropped in the box, stamped the envelope, making it possible to identify the spot in the city where the letter was mailed.
15. Before 1941, the MGB censorship also used to mark envelopes of censored letters by stamping the letter "A" which meant to initiated persons that the letter had been censored.

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16. Prior to 1941 and during the war, all correspondence sent or coming from abroad was censored, and correspondents were placed on the MGB operational lists. Such mail was copied or, more often, photographed. The VTs applied chemical treatment to some letters in order to establish whether invisible ink was used for secret writing.

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1. Comment: the term "MGB" covers nearly all branches of the Soviet intelligence and security organs, regardless of date.

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